

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A sequin feeding apparatus comprising:

a feeding mechanism for feeding a continuous sequin strip, let out from a reel and then placed on an upper surface of a supporting plate, a predetermined pitch at a time through forward and rearward movement of a feed lever, said feeding mechanism feeding the continuous sequin strip by causing said feed lever to move forward with a distal-end hook portion of said feed lever engaging a center hole of a sequin;

a lock lever having, ~~at a free end thereof~~, an engaging claw engageable with a center hole of a sequin; and

a lock lever drive mechanism pivotably supporting said lock lever near said feed lever, wherein, when predetermined-pitch feeding, by said feed lever, of the continuous sequin strip has been completed, said lock lever drive mechanism causes the engaging claw of said lock lever to engage a center hole of another sequin of the continuous sequin strip than ~~following the center hole the sequin~~ engaged by the hook portion of said feed lever, to thereby immovably lock the continuous sequin strip, and

~~wherein, when said feed lever should then resume the predetermined-pitch feeding moves rearward and then moves forward to again feed the continuous sequin strip, said lock lever drive mechanism causes the engaging claw of said lock lever to be disengaged from the center hole, so as to permit movement of the continuous sequin strip. by such a time when the hook portion of said feed lever engages a center hole of another sequin to resume feeding movement of the continuous sequin strip.~~

2. (Currently Amended) A sequin feeding apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said lock lever drive mechanism includes means for normally biasing said lock lever so that the engaging claw resiliently contacts an upper surface of a sequin on the supporting plate, and wherein disengagement of the engaging claw of said lock lever from the center hole of the sequin is carried out by said feed lever engaging with said lock lever to move the engaging claw, against a biasing force of said biasing means, as said feed lever moves rearward.

3. (Original) A sequin feeding apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said feeding mechanism supports said feed lever pivotably relative to a pivot arm that is driven to pivot by a motor, and said feed lever is normally biased in a direction where the distal-end hook portion resiliently contacts an upper surface of a sequin on the supporting plate.

4. (Original) A sequin feeding apparatus as claimed in claim 3 wherein said feed lever is normally biased by a spring in a feeding direction thereof, and an output shaft of the motor is placed in a freely-rotatable state after completion of a feeding cycle.

5. (Original) A sequin feeding apparatus as claimed in claim 3 wherein said pivot arm is driven via a link member coupled to an output shaft of the motor.

6. (Original) A sequin feeding apparatus as claimed in claim 2 wherein said feeding mechanism supports said feed lever pivotably relative to a pivot arm that is driven to pivot by a motor, and said feed lever is normally biased in a direction where the distal-end hook portion resiliently contacts an upper surface of a sequin on the supporting plate.

7. (Original) A sequin feeding apparatus as claimed in claim 6 wherein said feed lever is normally biased by a spring in a feeding direction thereof, and an output shaft of said motor is placed in a freely-rotatable state upon completion of a feeding operation cycle.

8. (Original) A sequin feeding apparatus as claimed in claim 6 wherein said pivot arm is driven via a link member coupled to an output shaft of the motor.